

however, that *Micropus* is not likely to enjoy a long reign. In the last number of the 'Ornithologische Monatsberichte,' Dr. Reichenow advocates a return to the still more ancient term *Apus*, of Scopoli, for the Swifts. *Apus*, of Scopoli (1777), has hitherto been passed over, because it has been stated that the same name had been proposed by Pallas in 1776 for a genus of Crustacea. But it now seems that this was an error, and that the term *Apus* is not to be found in Pallas's writings. It was used by Schäffer in 1756, but that was in pre-Linnean days, and does not bar its subsequent employment. The advocates of unmitigated priority will therefore, no doubt, proceed to call the Common Swift "*Apus apus*," and the family "Apodidæ": Dr. Reichenow suggests "Macropterygidæ," but we do not see how this could be justified. We venture the opinion that it would be more reasonable not to change the name *Cypselus*, which has been in constant use for the Swifts for many years, and is certainly neither the name of a plant nor of a Crustacean. We all know what is meant by "*Cypselus*," and this is the earliest name for the Swifts to which there is no serious objection.

XXIII.—*Obituary*.—Herr H. GÄTKE, Major C. E. BENDIRE,
and WILLIAM GRAHAM.

HEINRICH GÄTKE.—WE greatly regret to announce the death, on January 1st, of this distinguished Honorary Member of the British Ornithologists' Union, in his home on the Oberland, in sea-girt Heligoland, at the advanced age of 84.

Herr Gätke was born on the 19th of May, 1813, in a small town of the Mark of Brandenburg, and it was his desire to become a marine painter which first induced him to visit the island, where eventually he married and settled down for the remainder of his life. Subsequently, during the time of the English occupation, he held an important official post under the Governor. It was his outdoor work as a painter which brought him into touch with the

marvellous variety of bird-life periodically visiting the island, especially during the vernal and autumnal migrations. The frequent sight of so many strange and beautiful birds induced him first to commence a small collection; then came a great desire to know all about his specimens, whence they came and whither they went; and so his study of ornithology began and grew into a passion, and was persevered in for fifty years. For during this time he was rarely absent from the island. He had, however, one most memorable visit of two months—September to November—to Edinburgh and Scotland, the memory of which remained very fresh to the end of life, and he often spoke or wrote of the great silent hills and the leagues of purple heather.

From his copious notes and diaries, the accumulation of over fifty years, he wrote his remarkable book 'Die Vogelwarte Helgoland,' the value and importance of which to students of migration it is difficult to overrate. In 1874, when the writer first made Herr Gätke's acquaintance, this had already made considerable progress, but it was not till sixteen years later, in May 1890, that the last line was written. The first and German edition, under the editorship of his friend and countryman, Professor Rudolph Blasius, was published at Brunswick in 1891, and the excellent English edition and translation at Edinburgh in 1895, every line of this being revised and corrected by the author. This indeed was a matter for congratulation, for very shortly after a serious attack of influenza he became partially disabled by the disease—paralysis—which carried him off sixteen months later.

Before 1874 Herr Gätke knew little of English ornithologists or their work. In 'The Ibis' for 1862, p. 58, appeared a translation of a paper by Dr. Blasius in connection with the most noteworthy captures on the island, originally published in 'Naumannia' (1858, p. 803). There was also a list contributed by Gätke himself to the 'Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal' (new series, ix. p. 333), and this comprised almost all the ornithological information on Heligoland that was known in England. His library in 1874 was very limited,

and his chief books of reference were Brehm's 'Lehrbuch der Vögel Europas,' and the great work of the two Naumanns, father and son, 'Naturgeschichte der Vögel Deutschlands,' a book which he constantly used and referred to in his writings. From this year (1874) many eminent ornithologists visited Heligoland and made the acquaintance of Herr Gätke and his unique collections of migratory birds, butterflies, and moths. Several English friends who sympathized with his work sent over some of the best English literature connected with ornithology. Nor was the American brotherhood backward; so in time he became possessed of an excellent working library, which was of much use and value in helping him to complete his book.

Gätke spoke and wrote English perfectly, and for twenty-two years kept a regular correspondence and interchange of notes on migration with the writer. His last letter is dated December 20th, 1895, and briefly conveys Christmas greetings, concluding with regrets that he is not longer able to hold the pen in his feeble hands. His letters, like his book, are full of beautifully-expressed thoughts and word-paintings in connection with his favourite subjects, while the occasional pen-and-ink sketches all indicate the skilful artist. He was always ready and willing to impart his knowledge, and never weary of talking about his charming little visitors, the pilgrims over that great mysterious *Zugstrasse*. How well we recollect the delight with which the veteran naturalist at our last visit pointed out the recent specimens added to his collection, ranged all round the walls of his large, well-lighted studio, and then, stepping out into the pretty garden, famed for its roses, he pointed out the spots where some of his chief treasures had appeared. "On that pole *Emberiza rustica* perched; near there I caught my beautiful male *E. pityornis*; to the right of that highest willow, *Turdus varius* and *T. fuscatus*; *Emberiza melanocephala* I have repeatedly shot with my walking-stick gun; *E. luteola*, *Phylloscopus nitidus*, *P. fuscatus*, *P. viridanus*, *P. superciliosus*, and *P. tristis*, all within a very limited space." The kind owner of this treasure-plot never tired of

pointing out the wonders of his small demesne. Then we were conducted to the high plateau of the Oberland, with a sea-horizon in every direction, and again the marvellous story of bird-life was repeated ; almost every yard of the land, and each ledge, nook, and corner of the precipitous coastline, seemed linked with the memory of some far-travelled rarity.

In appearance Gätke was a man of fine carriage, very upright, and considerably over six feet in height. He had a finely-formed head, and none could know him without being struck with his noble presence. His cast of features reminded us of the portraits of 'Christopher North.' Notwithstanding his knowledge and experience, he was a man of great modesty, and never decried or undervalued the labours of his brother-workers. In one of his letters, speaking of migration, he says : " We may in time learn something of the How and When ; but as for the Why, that must ever remain an unsolved problem, till you and I launch out to the unknown shore, or manage to learn the language of the birds, and be told in their own tongue." At the time of his death Gätke was corresponding and honorary member of several scientific societies in England, Europe, and America. His collections remain on the island, and have now become the property of the German Government. Gätke has made Heligoland classic ground, and, so long as ornithology has an existence, the old storm-beaten crag will be associated with his name, rather than remembered as the island-fortress ceded by England to Germany.

In looking through Gätke's letters we were struck with the following passage, which seems now as applicable to himself as it was to the great naturalist to whom it referred :— " And Darwin has gone to rest too ; not many who have left so broad a mark behind as he, and fully deserved by so long a life of such earnest toil in so grand a vineyard."—J. C.

CHARLES E. BENDIRE, Major in the Army of the United States, died at Jacksonville, Florida, on the 4th of February last. A relative of Weyprecht and Payer, the discoverers of

Franz Joseph Land, Bendire was born in Hesse Darmstadt in 1836, went to America in 1852, and entered the United States Army in 1854; after which, till his retirement in 1886, he was almost continuously on frontier service at remote or inaccessible outposts. Apart from the reputation he acquired in Indian warfare, he was a well-known explorer, laid out many roads and surveyed routes for telegraph-lines, while as a naturalist no American of this half century has spent half so much time in the field or made such voluminous and accurate notes.

Bendire contributed several letters to the 'Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club,' and in 1877 he published an important paper on the Birds of South-eastern Oregon; but his great work is undoubtedly the 'Life-Histories of North-American Birds,' the second volume of which we have noticed on p. 268 of this part. He was an extremely popular man, and his death is deeply regretted; by no one more than by Dr. C. Hart Merriam, from whose obituary notice in 'Science' we have taken much of the foregoing. But as showing the character of the man, and the kind of experiences he met with when collecting, we cannot do better than give an extract from vol. i. of the above work (pp. 231-232), in which Bendire describes the finding of the first nest then known of *Buteo abbreviatus*, the Zone-tailed Hawk. On April 22nd, 1872, he had found one egg in the nest, and, as he naturally wished to obtain another, he paid a second visit to the locality on May 3rd:—

“As the bird appeared so very tame, I concluded to examine the nest before attempting to secure the parent, and it was well I did so. Climbing to the nest I found another egg, and at the same instant saw from my elevated position something else which could not have been observed from the ground, namely, several Apache Indians crouched down on the side of a little cañon which opened into the creek-bed about 80 yards further up. They were evidently watching me, their heads being raised just to a level with the top of the cañon. In those days Apache Indians were not the most desirable neighbours, especially when one was

up a tree and unarmed ; I therefore descended as leisurely as possible, knowing that if I showed any special haste in getting down they would suspect me of having seen them. The egg I had placed in my mouth as the quickest and safest way that I could think of to dispose of it—and rather an uncomfortably large mouthful it was, too ; nevertheless I reached the ground safely, and, with my horse and shot-gun, lost no time in getting to high and open ground. I returned to the place again within an hour and a half, looking for the Indians, but what followed has no bearing upon my subject. [There is a grim suggestiveness in this remark.] I only mention the episode to account for not having secured one of the parents of these eggs. I found it no easy matter to remove the egg from my mouth without injury, but I finally succeeded, though my jaws ached for some time afterwards.”

WILLIAM GRAHAM, of Gartmore, and of the Manor House, Crayford, Kent, died on March 12th, at the age of forty-seven. In early life he had some experience of sheep-farming in New Zealand, and on his return he devoted to sport and natural history as much time as could be spared from business. Accounts of excursions to the Scilly Islands, the Farnes, and the Bass Rock are to be found in the ‘*Trans. Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists’ Society,*’ but from the pen of Mr. Bidwell, for Graham disliked writing. He was partial to duck-shooting in Holland ; while, as a good fisherman, his practical knowledge led to his being appointed Chairman of the National Sea-Fisheries Committee. Elected a Member of the B. O. U. in 1886, and one of the original Members of the B. O. C., at the Meetings of which he was a constant attendant, Graham was well known and deservedly popular. It was only on the 21st of last January that he was presiding as Prime Warden of the Fishmongers’ Company at a dinner, the principal feature of which was the presence of a large proportion of explorers and scientific men, especially ornithologists ; and his genial personality will be much missed at our gatherings.